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"I'm not doing as well in this class as I'd like to": Exploring Achievement Motivation and Personality

This study looked at the relationship of explanatory style and self-systems (including self-esteem and self-efficacy) and the motivation (expectations for success and task value) of students who were dissatisfied with their performance in a particular class. One result is the confirmation that situated variables such as self-efficacy provide the strongest explanation of a student's motivation. Another result is that self-esteem seems to play a minimal role in explaining a student's motivation. Results suggest that learning assistance center (LAC) staff should directly ask students about their academic self-efficacy, expectations for success, and perceptions of task value related to specific courses. In addition, LAC staff should try to identify a student's explanation for not doing well in class.

"I am just not doing as well in this class as I would like to" is a lament made by many college students at some point during their higher education experience. Students who find themselves in this situation often seek out learning assistance center (LAC) staff for guidance. In particular, students may turn to LAC staff for assistance with their study skills, time management strategies, and other aspects of academic self-regulation. Students who are dissatisfied with their performance in a class may also find it difficult to stay motivated to succeed in it. Consequently, LAC staff may find themselves

in the position of trying to understand the motivation of these students and to appropriately respond to them. Even though this situation may be a common experience among college students, there has been little research exploring their academic motivations (Ormrod, 1999; Paris & Turner, 1994). Thus, the primary purpose of this study was to explore the achievement motivations of college students who are dissatisfied with their performance in a particular class.

The Situated Nature of Motivation

The importance of understanding the situational aspects of motivation has been noted and investigated by several researchers in recent years (Paris & Turner, 1994; Turner et al., 1998). Paris and Turner argue that "analyses of motivation should consider the characteristics of individuals in specific situations because a person's motivational beliefs and behavior are derived from contextual transactions" (pp. 213-214). These researchers identified four characteristics of situational motivation in different settings. One characteristic is that motivation arises out of a cognitive assessment of the situation or event. This assessment includes, among other things, the students' expectations, values, goals, rewards, and satisfactions. A second characteristic involves a cognitive assessment that enables the student to construct the event based on cognitive interpretations. According to Paris and Turner (1994), this constructivist viewpoint of motivation is based on the same constructivist models that are now prevalent in developmental, educational, and social psychology. A third characteristic shows motivation as contextualized because of the unique cognitive interpretations that individuals have for each event. The fourth characteristic of situated motivations is that motivations are necessarily unstable. That is, goals, expectations, values, and other elements that comprise the cognitive assessment are always in flux and subject to change. These four characteristics of situated motivation suggest that a typological view of motivation may not be sufficient. A typological perspective of motivation is characterized by generalized comments regarding student motivation, such as "this student has a high motivation to learn." While typological views of motivation may at times provide useful information, it is also important to consider contextual and situational factors. Understanding the global characteristics of students' motivational style towards learning may not always provide LAC staff with the situation specific strategies that will best assist the student to be academically successful. "I am just not doing as well in this class as I would like to" provides us with a situation that is necessarily contextualized and interpreted uniquely by each student. What is not known, however, is to what extent the motivations of students

in this particular academic situation are related to their personality constructs and "self-systems" such as self-esteem and self-efficacy. In particular, in this study we explored the influences of the personality construct explanatory style, and student self-systems on student motivations (expectations for success and task value). First, we review the theoretical relationships.

Expectation for Success and Task Value

Motivation has been studied extensively over the years using the expectancy-value theory (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Weiner, 1990). Atkinson and Feather first proposed this theory in 1966. The theory holds that a student's motivation to participate in an activity depends on the expectation for success and the value placed on the task (as cited in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). The expectancy component refers to the student's belief of being in control of learning and outcomes. Thus, this "control of learning" leads the student to have expectations regarding positive or negative outcomes (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991). Task value refers to the student's opinion of the importance, interest, or usefulness of the task. According to Pintrich et al. (1991), high task value will result in students being more involved in their own learning. As students gain control of their learning beliefs, their expectations for task success increase. As the value they place on the task increases, so does their motivation to pursue it (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Likewise, as students' expectations for success and/or value decreases, so does their motivation to participate.

Self-Systems

One characteristic that is often reported as related to this cognitive appraisal of expectation and value is self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura, self-efficacy "refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). In addition, Bandura argued that self-efficacy is necessarily situated. For instance, a student's self-efficacy in learning biology would entail the student's having explicit understanding of his or her competencies, skills, and limitations for that subject; therefore, the student would be able to set realistic goals and expected outcomes for that course. Bandura and others have also claimed that self-efficacy is not a generalized personality trait and is not related to global measures of self-esteem (Bandura, 1997; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Similar to situated motivation, self-efficacy beliefs vary depending on the differing judgments one has regarding the situation. Therefore, Bandura contended that examining students' overall self-efficacy (i.e., global self-efficacy)

for learning is not that useful. It would be more useful to understand students' judgments, goals, and expectations that are more specific to the situation. A student's self-efficacy towards learning calculus could be vastly different from his or her self-efficacy towards learning history. Thus for this study, student's self-efficacy for a class, "I am just not doing as well in this class as I would like to," will provide evidence as to the judgments and expected outcomes for students in this situation.

Regarding self-esteem, several researchers have claimed that there is no relationship between one's self-efficacy beliefs or other dimensions of motivation and overall feelings of self-esteem (Bandura, 1997; Beane, 1993; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). As Bandura noted, "The fact that I acknowledge complete inefficacy in ballroom dancing does not drive me to recurrent bouts of self-devaluation" (p. 11). These researchers suggested that there is insufficient empirical support to claim that student's motivation to learn, or self-efficacy for a given situation, is correlated with his or her generalized perceptions of self-worth (e.g., "I am a good person"). Others, however, have countered that generalized self-esteem is related to motivation and self-efficacy (Canfield & Wells, 1994; Mruk, 1999) and that there is research to support such a claim (Haugen & Lund, 1998; Hickman, Bartholomae, & McKenry, 2000). Elliot, Kratochwill, Cook, and Travers (2000) used a measure of global self-esteem to provide additional data that may help to better understand the relations, if any, with expectancy/value and self-efficacy dimensions of motivation, which may, in turn, help to clarify what some have considered to be the 'murky waters' of self-esteem research.

Explanatory Style

This study also looks at explanatory style, also known as attributional style, a "habitual way of explaining events that is a cognitive characteristic of the individual" (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002, p. 108). The explanatory style is grounded in Weiner's (1972, 1986) attribution theory, which postulates that an individual's reasons for his or her successes and failures can be described within a three-dimensional taxonomy: an internal/external (locus) dimension, stable-unstable (stability) dimension, and globality. The locus dimension places the cause within the individual or in the environment, whereas, the stability dimension identifies whether the cause is chronic or transient. Globality refers to the extent that the explanation will influence other aspects of one's life. In other words, is the explanation of the event limited to the specific situation and not likely to be repeated in other situations, or is the explanation likely to be the same explanation for many other events in one's life (Tennen & Herzberger, 1986)? The *Attributional Styles Questionnaire*, developed to

measure explanatory styles, evolved out of Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale's (1978) work on learned helplessness, in which they described how people wonder about why bad and uncontrollable events occur. According to the attribution model, how people answer the question "why" relative to their successes and failures determines how they will adapt to an event. While the test authors noted that reactions to stress and failures involve situational factors, the reactions also are influenced by temporally global judgments. Ickes and Layden (1976) also claimed "attributional styles," or consistent ways of reasoning about the causes of positive and negative events, do exist.

One example of explanatory style from a student's perspective is the source of success or failure in a class. For instance, did the student attribute success or failure in class to internal factors a student can control (e.g., time spent studying) or to external factors beyond student control (e.g., "the teacher just doesn't like me")? Was the cause for success or failure a one time occurrence (transient) or will it be repeated (chronic)? Finally, was the cause for the outcome limited to this specific class or will the same causal explanation be attributed to other events in the student's life? According to some attribution theorists, this explanatory style is a relatively stable personality characteristic that individuals use to interpret new situations or events (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Tennen & Herzberger, 1986). As one might expect, explanatory style is often correlated with an individual's cognitive assessments of expectation for success and task value. For instance, a student who feels in "control" of outcomes (expectancy) will typically also attribute success or failure to internal factors (explanatory style). Therefore, it is typically reported that attributions and expectancy-value components of motivation are related (Cross, 2001). In addition, explanatory styles are also often reported as correlated with self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Haugen & Lund, 1998).

Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to explore the relationships among the students' motivations towards a class in which they are not performing as they would like to, their self-efficacy beliefs towards that class, their optimistic or pessimistic nature (explanatory style), and their overall self-esteem. The results of this study should provide LAC staff with an understanding of students' situated motivations that can inform their work in assisting students who want to perform better in a particular class.

Method

Sample and Setting

Participants for this investigation were 164 undergraduate students recruited from a university located in the southwestern region of the

United States. The mean age of participants was 20.77 (*SD* = 3.15). The majority of the participants were freshmen (27%), sophomores (28%), and juniors (25%), with the remaining 20% comprised of seniors. The sample was 51% female and 49% male students. Of the sample, 4% identified themselves as Asian American, 7% Hispanic, 3% Native American, 71% White/Caucasian, and 15 as "other" or missing data. The mean self-reported grade point average for students in this sample is 3.11 out of a maximum 4.0 (*SD* = .57).

Instruments

The *Motivated Strategies Learning Questionnaire* (Pintrich et al., 1991) is a self-report scale containing 81 items designed to measure college students' motivational orientation and their use of learning strategies for a specific college course. For the purpose of our study, we analyzed students' scores on the Task Value (TV), Control of Learning Beliefs (CON), and self-efficacy (S-E) subscales. CON items refer to students' beliefs that their effort to learn will have positive outcomes (i.e., expectation for success). The item "It is my own fault if I don't learn the material in this course" demonstrates the nature of CON. As stated in the test manual, TV includes the components of interest, importance, and utility. Examples of the three types of TV items are "It is important for me to learn the course material in this class" (importance), "I am very interested in the content area of this course" (interest), and "I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in other courses" (utility). The S-E subscale includes items that measure the individual's judgment about his or her capability to accomplish a task and the expectation for success. The item "I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material" typifies a student's judgment about his or her ability to master a task as well as confidence related to performance. The aspect of expectancy for success is assessed through items such as "I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this class."

The MSLQ has demonstrated adequate levels of internal reliability for the majority of the subscales, ranging from 0.52 to .93 (Pintrich et al., 1991). Results from several confirmatory factor analyses reveal that the conceptual and measurement models of the MSLQ seem to have adequate construct validity (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1993). MSLQ scores were not found to be related to college students' scores on the Crown-Marlowe social desirability scale (Garcia & Pintrich, 1995). MSLQ items are presented in a Likert scale format in which students select a number to indicate their level of agreement with each item (1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*).

The *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* (RSES) is a 10-item measure of global

self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). Of the 10 items, 5 items are worded positively and 5 items are worded negatively. The ten items are presented alternatively in order to reduce the effect of respondent set (Rosenberg, 1965). A total score is obtained by averaging the 10 items, yielding an average score in the range of 1 (low) to 4 (high) (Hagborg, 1996). Moderate internal consistency coefficient alpha ranges from .74 to .77 are reported by McCarthy and Hoge (1984). The RSES yielded alpha reliabilities ranging from .88 to .90 across six assessments in a longitudinal study of 508 undergraduate college students (Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001). The validity of the RSES is supported by Rosenberg's (1965) research and documented by reviewers (e.g., Chiu, 1988). Hagborg (1996) found strong concurrent validity comparing the RSES with Harter's *Self-Perception Profiles for Adolescents* (Harter, 1988).

The *Attributional Style Questionnaire* (ASQ) of Peterson et al. (1982) was used to determine students' "explanatory style", which is the tendency to select certain causal explanations for good and bad events. The ASQ contains 12 different hypothetical situations (six good events and six bad events). Each situation is followed by a series of 4 questions, the first of which asks the individual to state one major cause of the situation. For example, the participant is asked to write down one major cause for the situation "You meet a friend who compliments you on your appearance" (example of a "good event"). The item "A friend comes to you with a problem and you don't try to help him/her" is an example of a bad event item. The first question related to each situation is not used in the final scoring. The second question assesses whether the person's response is *internal* or *external*. Stability is measured by the third question for each situation. Finally, a fourth question addresses whether the individual's response is considered to be *global* or *specific*. Because there is less evidence for the three subscales, the authors suggest researchers interpret a composite score for each person. Composite scores are obtained by computing a mean for the good event (Positive Attributional Style) and bad events (Negative Attributional Style) and then subtracting the negative score from the positive score. The ASQ has good internal consistency (Peterson et al., 1982), with reported Cronbach alpha values of .75 for good events and .72 for bad events. In their review of the ASQ, Tennen and Herzberger (1986) stated the instrument has adequate criterion and construct validity.

Procedures

The MSLQ was administered to participants, as a group, in undergraduate classes in Educational Psychology, Introduction to Japanese, and Military Science. In addition, surveys were administered to students

during Hall Council meetings held in the residence halls. Students also completed a cover page, which contained questions concerning selected demographic characteristics. One of the questions on this page was, "Do you currently have a class where you are not performing as well as you want to?" Students were then instructed to keep this class in mind while filling out the MSLQ. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants did not receive any course credit for their involvement.

The data was collected during weeks 11 and 12 of a 15-week semester in the Spring of 2001. Thus, students had sufficient time to receive feedback regarding their course performance. The original sample included 174 students. Within this group, 10 students (6%) indicated they did not have a course in which they were dissatisfied with their current performance. These 10 students were removed from the data set, meaning the final sample for this investigation represented only those students who stated dissatisfaction with their performance in a class. Note, this finding is consistent with previous research by Knapp and Karabenick (1988), who reported 94% of their sample of college students (n = 612) were dissatisfied with their current performance in at least one class. Table 1 highlights the demographic characteristics of the sample. The majority of students (60%) stated the course they were referring to for the purpose of this study was required for their major or general education requirements. Students self-reported the following expected grade for this course: A (12%), B (40%), C (39%), D (7%), and F (2%). As reported previously, the mean age of the participants was 20.78 with an overall self-reported GPA of 3.11. On average these students were enrolled fulltime (14.2 credit hours).

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n = 163)

	Percent	*M*	*SD*
Age		20.78	3.16
Credit hours currently enrolled		14.22	2.84
Self-reported GPA		3.11	.57
Required course?			
Yes	60		
Gender			
Male	49		
Female	51		
College class			
Freshman	27		
Sophomore	28		
Junior	25		
Senior	20		

Results

We first assessed the reliability of the data in this study. The Cronbach's alpha values for the current sample for the MSLQ subscales Task Value and Control of Learning Beliefs were .91 and .80, respectively. For the Self-Efficacy subscale the Cronbach's alpha was .90. The alpha for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale was .86. For this sample, Explanatory Style was measured by the ASQ, which had an alpha value of .73 for the total scale and .79 and .75 for the good and bad events, respectively. The mean scores for each subscale are reported in Table 2.

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations (n = 163)

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. CON	5.11	1.32	-	.55**	.56**	-.22*	.17*	-.07	-.01
2. TV	4.61	1.61		-	.52**	-.18*	.12	-.09	-.05
3. S-E	4.54	1.28			-	.06	-.05	.05	.20*
4. ASQ	2.40	2.69				-	-.70**	.61**	.30**
5. ASQNEG	12.95	2.15					-	.14	-.18*
6. ASQPOS	15.34	1.94						-	.24**
7. RSES	3.15	0.50							-

ASQ = Attributional Style Questionnaire (Explanatory Style); RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; CON = Control of Learning Beliefs; S-E = Self-Efficacy.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the relations between students' situated achievement motivations (as measured by expectancy-value and self-efficacy) and global self-constructs of explanatory style and self–esteem. First, correlations between variables were calculated to explore relations between global self-constructs and situated motivation measures. Second, stepwise regression was used to determine which independent variables significantly influenced expectancy-value components of motivation.

As shown in Table 2, the ASQ composite score is negatively correlated with control of learning beliefs (CON) ($r = -.22$) and task value (TV) ($r = -.18$). These values indicate a significant correlation ($p < .01$ and $p < .05$, respectively). The ASQ composite score was not significantly correlated with self-efficacy (S-E), however. A different picture emerges when we disaggregated the positive and negative framing of the ASQ questions and their relations with the achievement motivation variables. ASQNEG was significantly correlated with CON ($r = .17$; $p < .05$), but

not with S-E or TV. ASQPOS was not significantly correlated with any of the three situated measures. Global self-esteem (RSES), however, was not significantly correlated with CON or TV. RSES was significantly correlated with S-E, though (r = .20; p < .05).

We further explored the relations between global self-constructs and expectancy-value motivation by conducting step-wise multiple regression analyses. First, step-wise multiple regression analysis (unstandardized) was used to determine the variables that are significant predictors of Control of Learning Beliefs. The independent variables considered in the equation were ASQ and RSES, as well as self-efficacy. Since it was expected that the situated measure of self-efficacy would be a significant predictor of CON and TV, the goal of this analysis was to determine what additional explanation the global measures could provide in understanding situated student motivation. Variables were allowed to step in when their associated p value was less than .1. As indicated in Table 3, S-E (B = .569, T = 8.03, p < .001) and ASQ (B = -.105, t = -3.14, p < .05) were retained in the model as significant predictors of CON. Together, these variables explained approximately 34% of the variance in CON (R^2_{adj} = .337). Similarly for TV, S-E and ASQ were retained as significant predictors. As expected, S-E (B = .627, t = 6.81, p < .001) explained the largest amount of variance in TV and ASQ (B = -.105, t = -2.41, p < .01) was the second variable retained. Together, these two variables explained approximately 26% of the variance in TV (R^2_{adj} = .261).

Table 3
Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Control of Learning Beliefs and Task Value (n = 163)

Variables	B	_	*SE B*	*t*	Adj. R^2	R^2ch
CON						
S-E	.569	.553	.071	8.03	.295	.295***
ASQ	-.105	-.216	.034	-3.14	.337	.047**
TV						
S-E	.627	.495	.092	6.81	.235	.235***
ASQ	-.105	-.175	.044	-2.41	.261	.031*

ASQ = Attributional Style composite (Explanatory Style); RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; CON = Control of Learning Beliefs; S-E = Self-Efficacy.
* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Also of interest for this study was the differential role that ASQNEG and ASQPOS had on the situated motivation measures of TV and CON.

Specifically, given the negative situation for this study, "I am just not doing as well in this class as I would like to," it would be expected that the way that students respond to negative events as measured by the ASQNEG would help to further explain some of the variance in their motivation in this difficult situation. Again, stepwise regression was used for this analysis except that ASQNEG and ASQPOS dimensions were used instead of the ASQ composite score.

As indicated in Table 4, CON was significantly influenced by S-E (B = .567, t = 7.94, $p < .001$) and ASQNEG (B = .117, t = 2.81, $p < .01$) with approximately 33% of the variance explained (R^2_{adj} = .328). RSES and ASQPOS were not significant predictors. TV was significantly predicted by S-E (B = .621, t = 6.64, $p < .001$) with approximately 24% of the variance explained (R^2_{adj} = .235). Neither ASQNEG, ASQPOS, nor RSES were significant predictors in this model. Note, when the ASQ was separated into ASQ positive and ASQ negative dimensions, there was a relationship found between ASQNEG and Control of Learning Beliefs; however, this pattern did not emerge for Task Value.

Table 4
Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Control of Learning Beliefs and Task Value (n = 163)

Variables	B		*SE B*	*t*	Adj. R^2	R^2ch
CON						
S-E	.567	.550	.071	7.94	.295	.295***
ASQNEG	.117	.194	.042	2.81	.328	.038**
TV						
S-E	.621	.491	.094	6.64	.235	.235***

ASQNEG = Negative Attributional Style (Explanatory Style); RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; CON = Control of Learning Beliefs; S-E = Self-Efficacy.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

The regression analyses showed that the global personal constructs of explanatory style do account for a significant portion of variance in the situated motivational variables of Control of Learning Beliefs and Task Value. Interestingly, self-esteem did not make it into any of the models. In other words, we did find meaningful relations between one of the global self-construct measures and situated motivational dimensions of expectancy-value.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between students' situated motivations and their explanatory style and overall self-esteem. The personality construct explanatory style was found to be related to situated motivations as measured by an expectancy-value framework. In addition to the personality constructs, students' academic self-efficacy for a specific course was found to be positively related to their control of learning beliefs and task value. Though correlated with control of learning beliefs and task value, self-esteem did not provide unique explanation above and beyond what was already provided by the other independent variables.

There are three primary results to be discussed. One, and the least surprising, is the confirmation that situated variables such as self-efficacy provide the strongest explanation of a student's motivation. This finding is consistent with Bandura's (1997) theoretical perspective that self-efficacy beliefs mediate the motivating potential of outcome expectancies. The results from this study further support the contention that students' perceptions of their abilities and confidence for completing a task are strongly related to their motivation within the given situation. In this case, students who perceive that they have the competence to handle the situation of "I am not doing as well as I would like to" will tend to display a higher motivation to overcome this situation.

The second result is not as straightforward in explanation. While it was found that explanatory style (ASQ composite) was significantly related to control and task value dimensions of motivation, the direction was negative. In other words, the more "optimistic" the student was in explaining positive and negative events, the lower the student scored on control of learning beliefs and task value. This is an interesting finding and suggests that the more optimistic the student, the more motivation may be undermined by negative class performance. In contrast, students with relatively lower optimism may not have their motivation as easily undermined. However, when examining the differential role of explanatory style of negative and positive events, the results are clearer. The style in which students explain negative events (e.g., "I am just not doing as well in this class as I would like to") is related to their control of learning for that negative event. This study found the more optimistic the explanation for negative events, the more students felt in control of their learning in that situation.

A third result is that self-esteem seems to play a minimal role in explaining a student's motivation. Though self-esteem was significantly correlated with the motivation measures, it did not provide any explanation above and beyond that of self-efficacy and explanatory style as

evidenced by the regression analysis. This study found no evidence to support the contention that self-esteem is an important variable to consider when understanding a student's motivation to achieve in a given situation. Instead, considering other factors such as the student's self-efficacy for that situation may be more useful.

This study has several implications for LAC staff. First, the results provide useful information about specific statements to which LAC staff should attend when meeting with individual students. More specifically, the results suggest that LAC staff should directly ask students about their academic self-efficacy, expectations for success, and perceptions of task value related to specific courses. In addition, LAC staff should try to identify a student's explanation for not doing well in class. Students who provide an explanation that indicates that "success" is out of their control may need an intervention to help them assume more control. A useful, related point was made by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), who asserted that the predictiveness of expectancy-value models can be increased by adding a component of perceived social pressures by significant others. This perspective places students' self-beliefs, expectations, and values within a social context.

A second implication for LAC staff is the possible need to evaluate the purpose and content of Freshman Year Experience or similar academic success courses. We suggest academic success courses be designed to provide students with the opportunity to engage in ongoing self-assessment of their own self-efficacy, control of learning beliefs, task value, and explanatory style. This approach to FYE types of courses is consistent with Pintrich's (2000) will and skill model and Biggs' (1987) strategy and motive model of self-regulated learning. From this perspective, academic success courses should contain content related to student motivation beyond study skills or overviews of campus resources. Therefore, it is crucial for instructors to have a clear understanding of the principles of expectancy-value theory, self-efficacy, and explanatory style.

Finally, we believe the results from this study can guide practices in the area of tutor training. Academic self-efficacy repeatedly surfaces as a critical variable in understanding students' academic experiences and performance. Therefore, we suggest that tutor training address the theory and principles of self-efficacy theory, as well as the identification of explanatory styles.

In conclusion, the primary purpose of this study was to untangle some of the complex relations of motivation research. This study extends our understanding of college student motivation by contextualizing the situation to one in which the student is dissatisfied with his or her performance. While situational motivation is important to understand, the

results from this study suggest we cannot ignore the personality characteristics of the individual. Educational researchers and practitioners often focus on academic self-regulated learning, whereas personality psychologists often refer to "purposive orientations of human beings" (Ryckman, 2000, p. 600). From the perspective of purposive orientations, individuals are seen as seeking to find meaning in their lives by creating goals, values, and a philosophy of life. Purposive orientations include the following: (a) implicit and explicit cognitive strategies that enable individuals to cope effectively with various situational demands, (b) cognitive self-regulation and feedback control theory and techniques (Carver & Scheier, 2000), (c) life tasks or the problems people are currently working on, (d) goal approaches to personality (Emmons, 1997), and (e) values and human behavior (Dawis, 2001). We believe a promising new area for research is the integration of self-regulated learning theory with the purposive orientation perspective from personality psychology.

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